

Message Text

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S E C R E T MOSCOW 17389

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CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENTS AND CRAWFORD: U.S. REACTION
REF: STATE 184562

1. UPON MY RETURN TO MOSCOW I HAVE REVIEWED THE SITUATION CONFRONTING THE CORRESPONDENTS AND MUST SAY FRANKLY THAT THE APPROACH OUTLINED IN REFTEL GIVES ME CONCERN. I AM ALSO INCREASINGLY CONCERNED WITH OUR POSTURE ON THE CRAWFORD CASE - AT LEAST, AS I UNDERSTAND IT ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE TO ME.

2. REGARDING THE CORRESPONDENTS, IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THE SOVIETS WILL ALLOW THEM TO RETURN AND LEAVE THEM IN LIMBO, WITH AN IMPLICIT THREAT OF UNSPECIFIED ACTIONS HANGING OVER THEM. I CONSIDER THIS A HIGHLY UNSATISFACTORY OUTCOME FOR THE ENTIRE U.S. PRESS CORPS, AND BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD NOT SUPINELY ACCEPT IT. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE OPINIONS OF THE NYT AND BALTIMORE SUN SHOULD BE CONTROLLING IN FORMULATING OUR REACTION: THE ISSUE TRANSCENDS THE TWO PAPERS IN QUESTION, AND FURTHERMORE NO NEWSPAPER MANAGEMENT IS IN A POSITION TO KNOW AND ASSESS ALL THE
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FACTORS INVOLVED. THIS IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, NOT OF THE PRESS.

3. IF WE ARE TO KEEP APPROPRIATE PRESSURE ON THE SOVIETS TO DENY THEM THE FRUITS OF THEIR MOVE AGAINST PIPER AND WHITNEY, AND TO DETER SIMILAR REPRESSIVE ACTIONS AGAINST OUR JOURNALISTS IN THE FUTURE, WE MUST

SEE TO IT THAT THEIR OWN INTERESTS ARE AFFECTED ADVERSELY BY THEIR OUTRAGEOUS ACTION. THEREFORE, UNTIL THE CASE IS SATISFACTORILY AND FORMALLY RESOLVED, WE SHOULD WHITTLE AWAY AT THE SOVIET JOURNALISTIC PRESENCE IN THE U.S. WE SHOULD LEAVE THE SOVIETS IN NO DOUBT (VIA PRIVATE COMMUNICATIONS, NOT PUBLIC STATEMENTS) WHAT IS IN STORE FOR THEM, AND SCHEDULE OUR ACTIONS SO THAT THE LONGER THE ISSUE IS NOT RESOLVED, THE MORE THE SOVIETS WILL SUFFER FROM A CONSTRICTION OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. THERE SHOULD BE NO DIRECT EXPULSIONS OF SOVIETS (WHICH WOULD ONLY INVITE COUNTER RETALIATION) UNLESS THE CREDENTIALS OF WHITNEY AND PIPER ARE LIFTED, BUT A GRADUAL REDUCTION OF THEIR JOURNALISTIC PRESENCE IN THE U.S. TOWARD - BUT NOT BELOW - THE U.S. PRESENCE HERE.

4. REGARDING CRAWFORD, I AM ENCOURAGED THAT WE HAVE FINALLY PERSUADED INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER TO BE MORE ACTIVE ON HIS BEHALF. HOWEVER, WE ARE STILL FAR FROM OUR GOAL OF DIVORCING HIS SITUATION FROM THAT OF THE WOODBRIDGE DUO - WHICH SHOULD BE A PRIME OBJECTIVE. CRAWFORD WILL REMAIN ENTANGLED WITH THE SPY CASE IN THE U.S. UNLESS WE BEGIN TO MOVE MORE PERCEPTIBLY TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR. SO FAR, OUR ACTIONS HAVE BEEN MORE IN THE NATURE OF WARNINGS AND VERY MILD WRIST SLAPS. THE TIME HAS COME TO BEGIN A PROGRESSIVE
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REDUCTION OF THE SOVIET COMMERCIAL PRESENCE IN THE U.S., BY LOWERING THE QUOTAS FOR THE KAMA PURCHASING COMMISSION AND AMTORG. WE SHOULD LEAVE THE SOVIETS IN NO DOUBT AS TO WHY WE ARE DOING THIS, OR THAT THE PROCESS WILL CONTINUE INEXORABLY UNLESS AND UNTIL THE CHARGES AGAINST CRAWFORD ARE DROPPED.

5. IF WE, AT THIS POINT, SHRINK FROM FOLLOWING THROUGH IN TANGIBLE FASHION TO IMPLEMENT OUR PREVIOUS WARNINGS, WE SHALL BE GIVING THE WRONG SIGNAL TO THE SOVIETS - A SIGNAL WHICH WILL DAMAGE US IN MANY OTHER AREAS - AND WE ALSO RISK APPEARING IMPOTENT TO THE U.S. PUBLIC WHEN IT COMES TO EFFECTIVE ACTION TO DEFEND OUR INTERESTS. WE WOULD THEREBY ENCOURAGE FURTHER TESTING OF OUR RESOLVE BY THE SOVIETS, WHICH IN TURN WOULD BRING ON HEIGHTENED PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE FOR RADICAL ACTIONS WHICH MIGHT WELL PUSH US INTO A DANGEROUS CYCLE OF ACTION AND COUNTERACTION. IN SHORT WE RISK MORE DAMAGE IN THE LONG RUN IF WE FLINCH NOW AND ADOPT A TEMPORIZING "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE BEFORE DOING ANYTHING. TOON

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